

# MAINTENANCE

## AWARD

## WINNERS

## PROVE THAT

## PHOENIX

## LEGEND

## IS NO MYTH



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According to fable, the Phoenix is consumed in flames and then rises from its own ashes. But today it can be found rising from truck engines, steam valves, and aircraft electronics.

Each year six military maintenance organizations are honored for outstanding performance with Secretary of Defense Maintenance Awards. One of them, singled out as the very best, receives the Phoenix Award—named to symbolize how maintenance gives new and sustained life to valuable equipment and weapon systems.

The six organizations recognized in 1998 for their accomplishments range in size from a heavy truck maintenance unit with barely more than a dozen technicians up to an aircraft carrier with thousands of personnel. But what they all have in common is their unsurpassed spirit of dedication and excellence.

The awardees—two each in the small, medium, and large categories—are chosen from active and reserve units that perform maintenance at the intermediate or unit level (below the depot level).



## CONVOYS IN THE BALKANS

This year the Phoenix Award went to the U.S. Army's 68th Transportation Company, based in Mannheim, Germany. The company, a maintenance unit in the small category, demonstrated remarkable ingenuity, unflagging energy, and superior quality, all in rugged surroundings.

The "Eagle Express" company went to the Balkans as part of Operation Joint Endeavor /Guard.

With only 15 maintenance personnel (fewer than its authorized number), it sustained double the normal

number of vehicles, a fleet of 127 heavy cargo and command and control vehicles that were spread across four countries—this despite five

moves, depleted supplies and equipment, Spartan conditions, and below-freezing temperatures. The company's fleet drove more than 1 million miles with an average 92 percent readiness rate.

The unit


was a model of innovation and flexibility in solving problems. At one point, for example, it had to move



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from Croatia to Hungary but suspected that in a few months it would probably return to Croatia. So it left a detachment in Croatia to serve two purposes: support the daily convoys heading south, and act as an in-place advance party, reserving supplies that would be needed if the company returned. The unit was thus able to not only support daily operations effectively but also respond quickly for the return move that came a few months later, as expected.

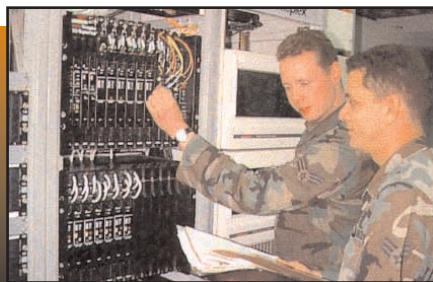
To take on responsibility for unfamiliar palletized load system vehicles, the company self-trained intensively while conducting 24-hour maintenance on the vehicles. To overcome personnel shortages, it cross-trained drivers, mechanics, and clerks, thereby quadrupling the unit's capabilities. And to avoid vehicle downtime due to a shortage of parts, the company modified components from one type of truck so they could be used for another. 


## INFORMATION SUPERIORITY

The U.S. Air Force 422nd Air Base


information superiority.

Squadron, the other Maintenance Award winner in the small category, is located at RAF Croughton in the United Kingdom. It operates 20 major strategic command and control systems linking U.S. and NATO forces. The squadron's Communications and Information Flight provided exceptional service in maintaining and implementing the technologies that give these forces



facility a year early, thereby doubling its capacity to connect combat personnel. Through smart innovation and maintenance effectiveness, it saved the government \$2.8 million. 

Despite unprecedented budget cuts, the unit distinguished itself with superlative maintenance. It modernized essential but aging strategic systems. It upgraded a crucial satellite communications


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## F15s AT THE READY

The U.S. Air Force 48th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, based at RAF Lakenheath, U.K., was a winner in the medium category. The unit performs intermediate-level and flightline maintenance for three squadrons of F-15 fighters, as well as air-to-air missiles and precision-guided munitions.

The squadron's energetic maintenance technicians were a major factor behind the 48th Fighter Wing's superior combat readiness and recognized success in NATO tactical exercises. In addition,

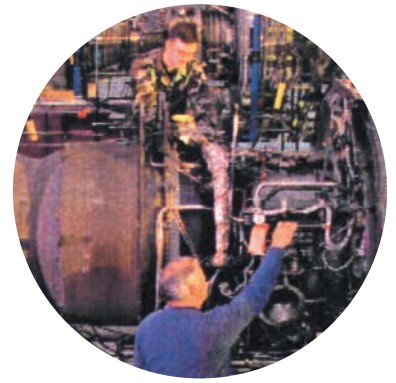


they developed numerous improvements for munitions, support equipment, and F-15 fleets worldwide. Time and again, the unit saved money and increased the serviceability of its assets by finding ways to repair items locally. It also impressed nuclear security inspectors with flawless technical operations and error-free training. 

# CHOPPER CHAMPS

Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 39, located at Camp Pendleton, CA, provides aviation logistics and intermediate-level maintenance for 135 AH-1W Super Cobra and UH-1N Huey helicopters. Its outstanding performance and dedication earned it a Maintenance Award in the medium category.

In many ways the squadron has lived up to its nickname, "Magicians." It produced the best productivity rates, turnaround times, and supply effectiveness in the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. To improve internal processes and support for the flying squadrons, it partnered with commercial firms and established an aggressive program of process action teams. It came up with innovative solutions to vexing maintenance and safety problems, in areas such as engine flameout and test equipment calibration. Its dedication and efficiency saved over \$1.2 million and made the squadron the unquestioned maintenance leader for H-1 aircraft.



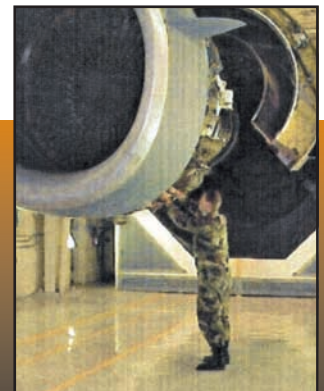
and more than 39,000 flying hours, "Team Charleston" gave the Air Mobility Command nothing less than its most reliable aircraft. Its maintenance technicians maximized the performance of an aging C-141 fleet and its newer C-17s; regularly exceeded existing standards—and often set new ones—for aircraft departure reliability and mission capability; simplified processes; reduced wasted time and material; and greatly improved their overall support. Such accomplishments have made Team Charleston's aircraft the first choice for many high-level and special missions.

# GLOBAL MOBILITY



The U.S. Air Force 437th (active duty) and 315th (reserve) Airlift Wings at Charleston Air Force Base, SC, were Maintenance Award winners in the large category. They maintain C-141 and C-17 cargo fleets that give U.S. troops and equipment rapid mobility with a global reach, and are vital to efforts such as humanitarian relief, civilian evacuations, and disaster recovery.

During 5,700 training and real-world missions




# SELF-SUFFICIENCY ABOARD

The U.S. Navy's aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Enterprise*, commissioned in 1961 and based in Norfolk, VA, is the other Maintenance Award winner in the large category. The maintenance crews on the world's first, fastest, and oldest nuclear-powered carrier handle a staggering array of responsibilities on board—nuclear power plants, propulsion systems, aviation weapons and controls, aircraft catapults, fuel stores, several types of aircraft—and support other vessels that accompany the *Enterprise*.

Those crews have kept the "Big E" in top material condition, mechanical operability, and operational readiness. Maintenance personnel ensured unprecedented oper-

ational readiness during operations in the Arabian Gulf, with zero mishaps and launch and recovery equipment available 99.5 percent of the time. The ship recovered nearly

8,000 aircraft without a single flight missed due to equipment failure or unavailability. Crews kept the ship's propulsion plant not only fully operational but in superior condition, and often performed complex repairs on

board that would usually require specialized shore facilities. And when the U.S.S. *Enterprise* faced a scheduled overhaul with slashed repair funds, sailors took on many of the tasks normally handled by shipyard contractors. They completed the overhaul in 4½ months instead of 6, saving \$13 million. 



# TIP OF A TALENTED TEAM

As their records show, these six organizations have plainly earned special distinction. Yet they represent only a sample of the many outstanding maintenance teams throughout the armed forces—all of whom demonstrate,

day in and day out, the same winning energy these awards signify: a devotion to excellence, a spirit of flexibility and innovation, and an intense drive to keep equipment reliable and ready. 